

## International Brahma Kumaris (BK) Green Team in Australia Aravali Meditation Sanctuary

### Retreat with Australian BK Green Team 20-22 September 2013

Eight members of the International BK Green Team arrived in Brisbane, Australia and were taken to the Aravali Meditation Sanctuary, approximately five hours south of Brisbane on Wednesday 18 Sep where they were able to relax into the silent ambience of the Sanctuary for a couple of days before the Australian BK Green Team joined them on Friday 20 September.

The international guests were:

Arnold Beekes, Netherlands  
Joachim (Golo) Pilz, India  
Luciana Ferraz, Brazil  
Renaud Russeil, France  
Sonja Ohlsson, Denmark,  
Tamasin Ramsay, USA  
Usha Jevan, South Africa  
Valeriane Bernard, Switzerland



The Aravali Meditation Sanctuary is coordinated by BKs Robin Ramsay and Michael Murphy. It is situated at the top of the Great Divide in the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales, in a 200 acre forest with World Heritage National Parks as neighbours. The Sanctuary is grid free and runs totally on solar and wood



fire energy and can very comfortably accommodate around 20 guests. The buildings are nestled in the bush which is also home to kangaroos, wallabies, platypus, possums and kookaburras.

The retreat began after dinner on the Friday with introductions incorporating an element or aspect of nature that each person resonated with and felt

reflected their personal qualities. Golo Pilz gave a presentation on the BK solar projects in India and included a very interesting presentation on the need for a new way of thinking and acting in respect to the energy that each one consumes. On Saturday morning a neighbour and biologist, Dr Mahri Koch shared an interesting presentation on endangered animal and plant species of the area.



The Australian team shared what they would like to gain from the retreat then Robin guided everyone on one of the number of walks that can be taken on the property. This was a silent meditative walk with nature and was called the 3L walk – looking, listening and loving. After the walk everyone was asked to contemplate on their experience and write a letter using the hand they don't usually use to write. The letter was to be a letter from the Earth to themselves



in which the Earth talked about her feelings. After dinner they were given the opportunity to share their letters. They then began a process to decide on a theme for service for the Australian Green Team for the year 2013-2014 by breaking into small groups with one member of the International Team in each group.

On Sunday there was a sharing of the themes discussed the previous evening and a simple and decisive vote was held to choose the winning theme which was **“I Can Make a Difference”**. The next step was to discuss types of service that could be done under the umbrella of this theme. Once again, breaking into groups with one member of the International team in each group, participants discussed many ideas which were then shared with the larger group. The final step of this process was to decide on a planning team to take the project forward.



“It was a wonderful weekend shared with nature and each other and we were all very pleased with the outcome, feeling inspired with newness and power” said Rebecca Attwood of the Australian Green team. “Thanks to Robin for his inspiration and making this event

possible, to Robin and Michael for their hospitality, to Matthew Martin from Wilton and Catherine Elliott from Brisbane for the wonderful cooking. Thanks to the Green Team for their inspiration and support and to Jessica Yuille for all of her hard work leading the Australian team.”

See a short film of the Green Team at Aravali at <http://www.vimeo.com/76248960>  
The Aravali Meditation Sanctuary’s website is <http://aravalimeditation.org/>



## Renaud Russeil, France shared his experience of the weekend

In the Aravali Meditation Sanctuary the 'green' foreigners were in ecstasy listening to the laughing kookaburras and watching the beautiful currawongs and crimson rosellas.



The main bungalow with meeting hall and kitchen

Our dear host Robin Ramsay welcomed us to the site and explained about the 100% organic food growing in the orchard, how to use the dry toilets etc. The buildings of the sanctuary are bungalows constructed with eco-friendly materials, absolutely free from polluting artificial electromagnetic fields. As a matter of fact, there was no grid for mobiles – we almost lived a life of Amish people. We reconnected the self to nature, felt fully in tune with our surroundings and forgot about the 'taking' spirit of wastefulness.

It took a little time to get used to the sounds of technology being replaced by the sounds of nature, a real form of silence. The sanctuary is dedicated to silence.

After the morning meditations and class, kangaroos and wallabies came around for their breakfast and the green visitors felt like children again watching the beauty of the wildlife. Every day we had a walk along one of the many pathways through the forest, "the bush" as they say here, among the hills, with an unusual feeling of belonging to this world.

From the purity in the relationship with matter it felt as if everything had a new exquisite taste, especially the meals prepared by our special chef from Wilton Retreat Centre, Matthew Martin.

During the day, there were discussions on empowering spiritual service in the field of the environment, an open door to many people in the world who dream of another kind of life where nature is no longer a huge supermarket or an immense casino based on consuming, a game of loss and profit.

In the evenings guests went back to their respective bungalows which accommodate up to three people each, with a peaceful heart and a contented mind.



The hall to access the bathrooms



"I can make a difference!" was the title that the 20 BKs gathered in the Sanctuary chose for an Australian Green Campaign, and why not, an international theme for serving those who feel related to the real sweetness of nature.

Time to move back to town came too quickly after three days and four nights. Driving through the very first town, we felt a very significant difference between the atmosphere of the Sanctuary and that of the regular world we had left!